



July 25, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi
Chairman
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark St., Ste. 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

At the Commission's hearing on Monday, July 18, you urged the Air Force, the governors, and their Adjutants General to "work to a solution that best serves the interests of our national security and our country." We are prepared and eager to do just that.

This response is a collective action of the Adjutants General Association of the United States (AGAUS), following a special meeting of the body in Washington, DC on Friday, July 22, 2005. We are mindful that 83 percent of the Air Force recommendations pertain to the Air National Guard and that the majority of these recommendations are outside the charter of the BRAC Act dealing with closure or realignment of installations. A "realignment" under the Base Closure Act pertains to installations, not to units, unit equipment, people or positions. As the BRAC Commission's Deputy General Counsel has opined, "The purpose of the Act is to close or realign excess real estate and improvements that create an unnecessary drain on the resources of the Department of Defense. The Base Closure Act is not a vehicle to effect changes in how a unit is equipped or organized."

The Adjutants General believe the proposed recommended actions are beyond the scope of the Base Closure Act and it would therefore be improper for the BRAC Commission to include these actions in its recommendations to the President and to the Congress. There are well established processes for dealing with these operational decisions--processes that have stood the test of time and have been followed for decades to the mutual advantage of the federal government and those of the states and territories.

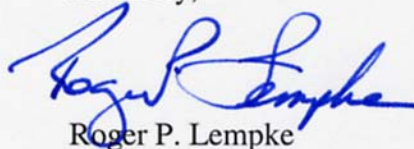
We have a way ahead for the Future Total Air Force and we are eager to engage with the Air Force outside of the BRAC process and its time constraints. Without going into detail, it provides (1) for an Air National Guard flying unit in every state, (2) unit equipped ANG air refueling and tactical airlift missions directly accessible to governors strategically dispersed on a regional basis for responding to domestic emergencies including homeland defense and homeland security exigencies, (3) sufficient and

appropriate sovereign air defense protection for all regions and population centers in the CONUS, (4) divestiture of legacy aircraft and weapon systems, and (5) transformational and proportionate ANG participation in all new and emerging flying and non-flying missions such as the F/A-22, F-35, KC-X, Light Cargo Aircraft, C-17, UAV, and space and information operations, to name just a few.

We look forward to working with Air Force representatives in the appropriate forum. To facilitate these discussions, we are eager to help the BRAC Commission identify those portions of the Air Force BRAC submissions which constitute programmatic as opposed to real property recommendations. The portions identified in this collaborative review should then be set aside by the Commission thereby allowing the states and the Air Force to deal with those issues using established separate processes.

Recognizing that time is of the essence, a special sub-committee of the Adjutants General Association has been authorized to work with the Commissioners and your staff and is available at your call. We hope and trust the Air Force will also embrace this collaborative path forward.

Sincerely,



Roger P. Lempke
Major General
President, AGAUS

cc: NGAUS (BG (Ret) Koper)
CNGB (LTG Blum)
ANG/CF (LtGen James)
AF/XP (LtGen Wood)